WHERE ARE THREE TRILLION CATS AND DOGS?

People love their pets; some even consider them family. Sixty-three (63%) percent of American households own pets; often multiple pets. That equates to more than 69 million households, which is up from 64 million in 2002 and 51 million in 1988.[1]

"The steady increase in pet ownership confirms that a growing number of us are realizing pets truly enhance our lives," said Bob Vetere, managing director and COO of APPMA. "Pets not only provide unconditional love and affection, research now shows they also provide significant health benefits."[2]

Do you want to be known as a politician who voted to eliminate pet ownership and destroy a multibillion dollar industry, especially in this economic climate? We have the facts, evidence, science and truth on our side. Proponents of mandatory spay/neuter provide <u>no</u> credible data, facts or studies to support their position; we do.

Proponents say 25 million puppies and kittens are born in the U.S. each year. **The actual number is 12.6 million.**[3] Proponents say that only one in 10 finds a "permanent" home. **The fact is nine out of 10 find homes.**[4]   Use of the word "permanent" is blatant emotional manipulation.

Proponents allege one unspayed dog and its offspring <u>can</u> produce 67,000 dogs in six years.

This is a misrepresentation based on *exponential possibilities* rather than fact, reasonable probabilities, or science. Proponents' use "can" to give themselves plausible deniability, which may be indicative of their awareness of the problems inherent in their numbers.

When proponents' alleged 67,000 offspring is factored into real world numbers, the misrepresentation becomes very obvious: *In relation to dogs:*

> There are 73 million pet dogs in the U.S.[5]
> Multiply that by .50 (appx. ½ are female)
> The result is 36.5 million females
> Multiply 36 million by .25% (75% are spayed)
> The result is 9.13 million intact females
> Multiply the 9 million by the alleged 67,000 offspring (in 6 years)
> *<u>The result is a staggering 611+ billion dogs.</u>*

Proponents allege one unspayed cat and its offspring <u>can</u> produce 67,000 cats in six years.

Another even more glaring misrepresentation is found repeating the process above with dogs for cats, when we "insert" proponents' alleged 420,000 offspring into real world numbers. *In relation to cats:*

> There are 90 million pet cats in the U.S.[6]
> Multiply that by .50 as appx. ½ are female[7]
> Now we have 45 million (using the lower total number for proponents' benefit)
> Multiply that by .20 because an estimated 80% of owned cats are altered.[8]
> We now have 9 million intact females that "can" have 420,000 offspring in seven years
> Multiply that 9 million by the 420,000
> *<u>The result is a staggering 3.78 TRILLION cats.</u>*

There is, however, another problem for proponents. **<u>There are not that many owned dogs and cats in the U.S.</u>**; or, if statistics from other countries are correct, in the entire world as the top ten countries combined had less than 500 MILLION![9] Multiple sources estimate there are only between 150 to 171 million dogs <u>and</u> cats in the U.S.[10] [11] [12] The total birth rate for both dogs and cats is 12.6 million,[13] *and is declining.*

These numbers illustrate that *proponents err in their computations by more than three trillion animals!*

A study of feral cats (more likely to reproduce) found that <u>in 12 years</u>, one stray unspayed female with all her unspayed female offspring can "reasonably" be expected to have 3200 kittens if there is no human intervention.[14] [15] This does not, however, factor in the high mortality rate of the kittens and TNR (trap/neuter/release) programs. It also assumes that all offspring live the full seven years when in reality, their average llifespan is two to three years.

Jerry Folland, a mathematician with MIT, was quoted in an article as saying he calculated the actual number may even be far lower, only 99 surviving cats after seven years.[16]

THEIR NUMBERS DON'T WORK:

12.6 million dogs and cats were born in the U.S. in 1996 and the birthrate continues to decline. Nine out of 10 dogs and cats stay in their homes which means that only 1.26 million (10%) *could* end up in shelters. We use "could" as it is highly unlikely that the full 10% would. Even if they did, they would be only 16.67% to a maximum of 33.33% of the animals euthanized; however, puppies and kittens are highly adoptable -- much more so than adult animals.

Consider:

> The total number of <u>dogs and cats</u> owned today in the U.S.is +/- 171 million.[17] [18] [19]
> The total number of <u>dogs and cats</u> killed in shelters in the U.S.is between 3 and 6 million a year.[20] [21]
> That means, at any given time, the number of dogs and cats in shelters represent a mere 1.75 to 3.51 percent of the entire U.S. dog and cat population.

The number euthanized continues to decline from a high in 1970 of 23.4 million to 4.9 million in 2005.[22] Only 3.7 million were euthanized in 2008.[23] Current statistics are unavailable, although it is rumored that this year as few as 2+ million will be euthanized with pit bulls and cats making up a large and rising percentage of these animals.[24]

34 million pet owners are seeking another pet. 17 million people are open to adopting a shelter animal. If 3 to 6 million of them could be persuaded to adopt from a shelter, all of the healthy and/or treatable shelter animals could be saved.[25] [26] [27] [28]

Assuming *demand* continues to increase, as it has, a shortage of available dogs and cats, especially in some areas, is not only possible; it is here now. Shelters in various parts of the country are importing animals from other sections or even foreign countries.[29] People do so because shelters are empty! There is also a growing "black market" in puppies being smuggled across our borders to meet the demand here.[30] [31]

Statistics show 12.6 million births of dogs and cats[32] and 3 to 6 million deaths in shelters per year or that there are 18.2 million animals available from all legal sources. 17+ million[33] people are looking to obtain an animal. Therefore, supply only slightly exceeds demand now, even if we assume all of the animals euthanized in shelters are adoptable and that a potential owner is willing to obtain a shelter animal..

Our facts and statistics can be substantiated, often by multiple sources. Our numbers can be reconciled with real world numbers, proponents' numbers cannot be.

CONCLUSION:

A shortage of purebred dogs and cats is already evident. A shortage of mixed breed dogs and cats is eminent. Many breeds of dogs and cats are already difficult, if not impossible, for the average owner to find -- much less afford. Do we really want pet prices to escalate to the point that only the rich can afford them? Do we really want to wipe out tens of thousands of years of breeding dogs for specific purposes? Do we really want dog breeds to go extinct.

There will be no pets. There will be no service animals, no narcotic dogs, no termite dogs, no therapy dogs, no hunting dogs, and no dog sports. Pets in the home are known to improve emotional, mental and physical well-being especially in the disabled, old, young and isolated. Pet ownership should be supported and not made more difficult or expensive.

Economically, the pet industry is a multibillion dollar powerhouse, a powerhouse that will come crashing to a halt if additional mandatory spay/neuter laws continue to decimate the population of dogs and cats.

Ask for proof of proponents' numbers and/or for sources for their claims; compare their facts and numbers to ours - side by side - and you will see how ludicrous their numbers are.

Mandatory spay/neuter laws are ill-advised, unenforceable, and not supported by the evidence and, as such, should be opposed.

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Footnotes:

1 APPMA's 2005-2006 National Pet Owners Survey

2 http://channels.isp.netscape.com/homerealestate/feature.jsp?story=rainingcatsanddogs

3 Birth and Death Rate Estimates of Cats and Dogs in U.S. Households and Related Factors, Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, 7(4), 229-241

4 Id.

5 APPMA's 2005-2006 National Pet Owners Survey

6   Id.

7 http://www.feralcatproject.org/aboutthecats_truths.aspx

8 http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/jan04/040115a.asp

9 http://www.mapsofworld.com/world-top-ten/countries-with-most-pet-cat-population.html and
http://www.mapsofworld.com/world-top-ten/countries-with-most-pet-dog-population.html

10 APPMA's 2005-2006 National Pet Owners Survey

11 U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook,
http://www.avma.org/reference/marketstats/sourcebook.asp

12 http://vetmedicine.about.com/cs/diseasesall/a/aa051303a.htm

13 Birth and Death Rate Estimates of Cats and Dogs in U.S. Households and Related Factors, Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, 7(4), 229-241

14 http://www.feralcatproject.org/aboutthecats_myths.aspx

15 As reported by Berkeley, E.P., Maverick Cats. New England Press, 1982 Trying to Herd a Cat Stat, Carl Bialik, numbersguy@wsj.com, October 12, 2008, Wall Street Journal,
http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB116058075161889442-IYuNdkAkVQ_6ek9wYAJOj8Ill6c_20071216.html?mod=blogs

16 Id.

17 APPMA's 2005-2006 National Pet Owners Survey

18 U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook, http://www.avma.org/reference/marketstats/sourcebook.asp

19 http://vetmedicine.about.com/cs/diseasesall/a/aa051303a.htm

20 http://www.maddiesfund.org/Resource_Library/A_Big_New_Voice_for_Shelter_Animals.html

21 http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/pet_overpopulation/facts/overpopulation_estimates.html

22 http://www.animalfolksmn.org/animal-overpopulation.html

23 http://www.americanhumane.org/about-us/newsroom/fact-sheets/animal-shelter-euthanasia.html

24 http://www.animalfolksmn.org/animal-overpopulation.html

25 http://www.maddiesfund.org/Documents/Funded%20Projects/The%20Shelter%20Pet%20Project%20Powerpoint%20v2.pdf

26 http://www.maddiesfund.org/Resource_Library/A_Big_New_Voice_for_Shelter_Animals.html

27 Birth and Death Rate Estimates of Cats and Dogs in U.S. Households and Related Factors, Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, 7(4), 229-241

28 http://www.animalsheltering.org/resource_library/magazine_articles/may_jun_2009/big_new_voice_for_shelter_animals.pdf

29 http://www.naiaonline.org/articles/archives/redefining.htm

30 http://www.cbp.gov/xp/CustomsToday/2006/jun_jul/other/puppies.xml

31 http://veterinarynews.dvm360.com/dvm/Veterinary+news/Inside-the-black-market/ArticleStandard/Article/detail/662872

32 Birth and Death Rate Estimates of Cats and Dogs in U.S. Households and Related Factors, Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, 7(4), 229-241

33 http://www.maddiesfund.org/Documents/Funded%20Projects/The%20Shelter%20Pet%20Project%20Powerpoint%20v2.pdf